1: Longrigg MH1 Iraq MH1
647, 721, 727, 728

[For an account of the British invasion and campaign in Iraq in 1914, the subsequent occupation and the British war-time administration of Iraq in 1917-18, the civil administration by the British from the end of the war in 1918 to 1920, see category 116, pp. 77-121.]

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

lately back in Baghdad triumphant—left hurriedly for Syria, preceded by such of their aircraft as could fly. The Regent Sharaf accompanied ministers to Persia. Yunis Sab'awi, Minister of Economics, appointed himself Military Governor of the capital, and exhorted the demoralized public to organize a final resistance; but his power, if any, lasted barely a day. He fled; and the Generals were not far behind, abandoning their posts and duties as their ill-judged and mischievous adventure ended in fiasco. The steadfast Mayor, Arshad al-'Umari, alone remained to preserve what order he could, to direct dissolution of the armed gangs of the Youth Movement, and on 30 May to form a Committee of Internal Security with the strong support of law-abiding opinion. On the evening of that day, sponsored by Knabenshue, he appeared at the British Embassy. Cornwallis at his instance sent a wireless message to the G.O.C. at Habbaniya to receive, if he would, a flag of truce that night. Terms of armistice—not of peace, since war had never been declared—were without difficulty arranged between the Ambassador and the Security Committee. They provided for a cease-fire, the continued independence of the country and retention of its Army intact, release of prisoners, arrest of enemy (German or Italian) forces, and the opening of all communications in 'Iraq in accordance with the Treaty: conditions which showed both magnanimity and good sense. A detachment of British troops entered Baghdad on the following day, and British residents in Baghdad, Mosul, and Kirkuk could emerge from a month-long captivity which, not without its humours, had been galling, humiliating, and anxious, to find many of their houses looted. The attitude of the Baghdad crowds was sullen and bitter; the effects of dashed expectations and the aftermath of long-drawn Axis propaganda were slow to disappear.

The Regent had passed three weeks in Palestine and Jordan. He returned to 'Iraq on 22 May escorted by his faithful ministers and by a British representative, Colonel G. de Gaury, and broadcast once more to his people. The Guard of Honour which welcomed him to Habbaniya was composed of 'Iraqi troops and officers who had surrendered to the British at Sinn al-Dhibban while fighting for his enemies and supplanters, and who now without effort changed sides again. The Amir entered Baghdad on 1 June, welcomed by the British Ambassador and by crowds of his own well-wishers. But the sinister possibilities of the hour, and the urgent need to install a Government, were overlooked in the glow of acclamation and victory; the night of 1 June and part of 2 June were disgraced by serious bloodshed and looting in quarters of Baghdad, with violent hooliganism directed against the Jews. The outbreak had in large part been organized by the fugitive military

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officers on the scale, they hoped, of a counter-revolution; it represented partly also reprisals by the Youth Movement, of whom many were caught red-handed, and partly the brutality and avarice of the lowest mob elements. The Committee of Internal Security was caught unawares, the Police proved unreliable and impotent, and order was restored only by troops brought in from outside. At noon on 2 June Jamil al-Madfa'i assumed with reluctance the task of forming a Ministry, and set himself to the restoration of normal tranquillity. A reliable Mutaṣarrif assumed charge at Baṣra.

The movement thus overcome will long bear, in obloquy or praise, the name of Rashid 'Āli. His part in it was in fact both unsought and limited. Willing himself to keep in good outward relations with Britain, at least until her defeat was certain, and never as rabidly xenophobe as many another, he was forced first to specific disagreement and then to actual hostilities with the ex-Mandatary by the pressure of his military backers, whom in spite of all precedent he had hoped to control, and by the impatience of his own closest followers. Unmoved by any principle of loyalty to treaties, basically unfriendly to Great Britain, and impetuous and self-confident by nature, he had yet never committed himself to Germany, as had the Generals and Naji Shawkat; he had hoped always to achieve a subtle neutrality and to gain, if possible, for his country from both sides. Rashid 'Āli's acts in his last premiership represent no settled conviction or resolute policy; he drifted or was forced from step to step. Whoever, indeed, had assumed the premiership on 1 April, in conditions which made the Army leaders all-powerful, must either have played a part not unlike Gaylani's, or soon made way for another to do so. There were other policies, other convictions in the 'Iraq of the moment—but no other power than the Army.

If timing had been concerted with the Germans, and their help punctual, the movement, however achieved, could scarcely have failed. A few hundred German troops, a few score of aircraft, could have occupied 'Iraq and vitalized its Army, could have dominated Persia and its oil, closed the southern doors to Russia, and threatened the Levant from the east. That such was not the outcome followed from three factors: the feeble irresolution of the 'Iraq Army at Habbaniya and thereafter; the failure of the Axis to provide timely help, thanks to the British resistance in Crete and to Hitler's plans for the invasion of Russia; and the rapidity and successful bluff of the light British forces. The British intervention, still today condemned by 'Iraqi irreconcilables as unjustifiable 'interference', in fact saved the country first from military dictatorship, then from certain German occupation, and finally from identification with the losing side in the War.

6: Ireland MH1 Iraq MH1

● 727

/For an account of British occupation and administration of Iraqi territories during and after the First World War, see category 116, pp. 74-382./

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175* so recent in origin and a people so recently brought into contact
185 with larger ideas than have motivated them for centuries past, that a relative standard of judgment should be applied. On such a standard the League of Nations itself was obliged to assess the readiness of 'Iraq for independence, in response to the firm insistence on the part of the Mandatary, which declared in its special report presented to the League in 1931:

> His Majesty's Government have never regarded the attainment of an ideal standard of administrative efficiency and stability as a necessary condition either of the termination of the Mandatory Regime or of the admission of 'Iraq to membership of the League of Nations. Nor has it been their conception that 'Iraq should from the first be able to challenge comparison with the most highly developed and civilised nations in the modern world.[1]

On the basis of a similar standard it can be confidently stated that 'Iraq not only achieved unprecedented development in the period from 1914 to 1932, and particularly since 1921, but much of the development has been maintained since 1932. The development at the time of 'Iraq's entrance into the League may not have been so great as put forward in the Official Reports or in the statements made by British representatives to the League of Nations, nevertheless it has been very real. Less than a score of years previous to 1932, 'Iraq was an isolated lethargic maladministered portion of the Ottoman Empire. In 1932, as since that time, 'Iraq has occupied a strategic position on the highway of air-communications. It possesses the machinery of a modern democratic state although the control is now centred in a Government backed by military force. It belongs by general acceptance to the international community, having assumed the obligations of a sovereign nation for international agreements.

175* In reaching this state of development, 'Iraq has undergone
● 227 a period of direct British control, first under military and then
185

[1] *Progress of 'Iraq*, p. 11.

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under civil administration, followed by a period of tutelage. Under the first of these regimes, the administrative and economic development took place according to the dictates of an Anglo-Indian administration, apparently determined to make of 'Iraq an Indian province. Under the mandatory regime, extending from 1920 to 1932, 'Iraq was forced to accept the restricting hand of the mandatory Power but, at the same time, was able to count upon its support and assistance.

The British Government, as Mandatary, had assumed definite responsibilities from the League: the granting of assistance for the development of 'Iraq's political and social institutions, for its economic regeneration and for its protection from external enemies. These obligations it was not unprepared to honour but only on its own conditions, imposed in a manner which, as has been indicated, guaranteed its position in the country. These conditions do not seem to have been laid down because of any inherent lack of sympathy with 'Iraq's national aspirations. On the one hand, the British Government felt unable to relinquish the Mandate, for fear of losing prestige, until it had satisfied world opinion that as Mandatary its obligations had been fulfilled. On the other hand, the British Government was unwilling to give up its favoured position in 'Iraq until it had achieved the aims for which, in accordance with British policy in the Middle East for the past century and a half, it had occupied 'Iraq. These aims included the control of the land route to India, now vital to the British Empire as the result of the development of air-transport; the assurance of peace and order in the strategic centre of the Middle East; the extension and protection of British commerce; and the control of the existing and potential oil-producing districts of 'Iraq and Persia. Until these objectives were achieved, through the establishment of a stable government, 'friendly to and bound by gratitude and obligations to H.B.M. Government',[1] the 'Iraqī Nationalists seem to

[1] Instructions of H.M. Government to the High Commissioner of 'Iraq, cited *Admin. Report*, 1927, p. 11.

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have had little effect on British policy. Although agreeing to the progressive restatement of its relations with 'Iraq, the British Government diminished no whit of its insistence that its advice, through the High Commissioner and the British officials, be taken; that its assistance, as outlined in the Treaty and the Agreements, be employed; and that its will as the mandatory Power be the ultimate authority.

If the formal relinquishment, October, 1932, by Great Britain of her right to control the affairs of 'Iraq except in accordance with the Treaty and Agreements still in force, marked another stage in 'Iraq's political existence, the work of development has not been completed. In the continued reorganization of finances, in the perfection of the Judicial system, in the raising of education standards, and in the extension of agriculture, irrigation and means of communication still lie much to be done. Hopeful signs of governmental action would seem to appear in the current version of the frequently altered Five Year Capital Works Plan with its provision for irrigation projects, roads, bridges, 130 schools and numerous health centres,[1] in the proposed Health Campaign,[2] and in the recently created Agricultural Bank,[3] and in the many new proposals laid before the Chamber by the new Government. 'Iraq's recent treaty of friendship with Sa'ūdī Arabia, April 2nd, 1936,[4] and her amiable relations with Turkey seem to point to the removal of these two external dangers. Within the country still lie the problems of the creation of a social class of citizens, now beginning to appear, capable and willing to assume political duties from a sense of public duty and not of personal aggrandizement, the evolution of a free Press motivated by public spirit rather than by individual or party grievances, the assurance of free elections, and the elimination of sectarian and sectional animosities which will eradicate the antipathies between tribesmen and townsmen, will bring the Shī'īs into

[1] *G.B. and E.*, April 9th, 23rd, 1936.
[2] *N.E. and I.*, August 8th, 22nd, 1935.
[3] *G.B. and E.*, March 26th, 1936. [4] Text: ibid., April 23rd, 1936.